

the latest reports of the Medicare and Social Security trustees, we are staring at 75-year fiscal exposures of \$32 trillion and \$4.7 trillion for each of these programs, respectively. This means that the current level of projected revenues for these two programs is nearly \$40 trillion less than is needed to pay for our projected spending on them over the next 75 years. If you include the other obligations of our government, our overall fiscal exposures are greater than \$46 trillion over this time period, or about \$375,000 for every full-time worker in the U.S.

We cannot leave this problem unaddressed. The long-term health of our economy is at severe risk, as are the benefits that have been promised to our constituents. Including this figure in the Financial Report will finally force the federal government to level with its citizens and admit the daunting fiscal challenges we face. Furthermore, highlighting this problem will help encourage Members of Congress to take it more seriously, and to work on a bipartisan basis to address it.

I am also hopeful that this aspect of our proposal can help FASAB find a compromise solution to its current impasse over a new set of accounting standards for our social insurance programs. Earlier this year, FASAB released a proposal that would recognize a liability for Social Security and Medicare once a beneficiary had completed 40 quarters of work in covered employment, the period of time required to qualify for these benefits. The liability would show up on the audited Statement of Net Cost and Balance Sheet contained within the Financial Report. This view was met with substantial controversy and FASAB is not expected to move forward with it.

While I believe that FASAB's primary approach has a great deal of merit, I understand the critiques made against it. Opponents justifiably pointed out that this proposal fails to credit the government for the revenues that these programs are projected to receive over the same time period and perhaps inappropriately calls these commitments "liabilities" even though they do not represent contractual obligations. In addition, the primary proposal could make the current measure of accrual liabilities unusable since the size of the Social Security and Medicare components would dwarf the liabilities of other programs and possibly hide their own set of problems and concerns.

Our proposal addresses all of these concerns. It would fully account for projected revenues, would use the terminology "fiscal exposures" instead of "liabilities" to reflect the true nature of the obligation, and would leave the current accrual measures untouched so they could still be used by policymakers. At the same time, it would ensure that a measure of our fiscal exposures is on the audited portion of the Financial Report for the first time ever. I am hopeful that this is the type of compromise that FASAB could accept. While it may not go as far as some of the board members and some Members of Congress may hope, I believe that it makes real, although admittedly incremental, progress at uncovering the true nature of our long-term obligations.

The second component of this bill comes from an amendment Mr. COOPER offered during consideration of the House Budget Resolution in 2006, which passed the Budget Committee in a bipartisan manner. I strongly support this proposal and commend Mr. COOPER

for his leadership on the matter. I am hopeful that the Budget Committee, of which I am the Ranking Member, will seek to permanently enact this provision. I look forward to working with Mr. SPRATT and other distinguished Members of the Committee to accomplish this.

Finally, this proposal would require the Secretary of the Treasury and the Comptroller General of the GAO to testify before Congress on our fiscal exposures. The Secretary of the Treasury would have to testify on the Financial Report, which is a document that far too few Members of Congress, let alone the public, are aware of. While Members such as Mr. COOPER and Mr. KIRK have done a great job in recent years in starting to build awareness of this document, this proposal would take the next important step.

The Comptroller General would also have to report to Congress on the full extent of our fiscal exposures on an annual basis. This would go a long way toward ensuring that Members of Congress and the public start paying attention to these daunting figures. Our current Comptroller General, Mr. Walker, has fought vigorously on this matter and has done an excellent job of alerting people to the challenges we face. This would give him a regular forum in which to do so and allow him to continue performing an excellent service to the Nation.

Before I close, I would like to thank the other lead cosponsors for allowing me to join their effort. This issue is something that Mr. COOPER and Mr. KIRK have worked diligently on for years and I am glad to be a part of the latest version of their bill. Ms. BACHMANN also deserves immense credit for drawing on her financial background and striving to become a leader in Congress in this area. She was instrumental in putting together this legislation and ensuring the participation of such a strong bipartisan coalition.

I am truly hopeful that our fiscal exposures will not continue to go unnoticed and that we can help build congressional support for entitlement reform. The challenges we face are too big to ignore. If we do not level with the American people about the true nature of this problem and seek to address it, we will be jeopardizing the economy and standard of living of future generations.

MILITARY HONORS FOR VETERANS' FUNERALS

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 24, 2007

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, and colleagues, I rise today to speak about a bill that I have just introduced, "Providing Military Honors For Our Nation's Heroes Act" (H.R. 3954), to reimburse expenses of volunteers who provide military funeral honors at veterans' funerals.

Because thousands of servicemembers are deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan while thousands of World War II and Korean War veterans die each day, there is simply not enough military to provide a proper 7-person honors detail for these funerals. Some families of veterans have had to "make do" with a CD playing taps. I am saddened by this outrageous situation and determined to provide proper military funeral honors for all families who request them.

This bill will allow reimbursement to volunteers from members of veterans' service organizations (VSOs) and other organizations approved by the Secretary of the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA). Transportation costs and other expenses, such as cleaning uniforms, incurred in providing funeral honors details will be reimbursed. A second change will allow reimbursement to details that are requested by funeral homes and the VA, as well as the Department of Defense, the current practice.

Currently, members of VSOs and other volunteers can assist the military by providing a color guard, pallbearers, a bugler or firing party, but the law does not address ceremonies in which VSOs render honors without military representation. My bill will allow volunteers to be reimbursed even when no military person is a part of the honor guard. This change will increase the number of honors details available to families. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL PROVIDING TAX RELIEF WITH RESPECT TO THE CHILDREN OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES WHO DIE AS A RESULT OF SERVICE IN A COMBAT ZONE

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 24, 2007

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce H.R. 3961, which would increase from \$1,000 to \$5,000 the maximum amount of the child tax credit allowed under section 24 of the Internal Revenue Code for those widows and widowers with children of the members of our Armed Forces who have been killed in combat in Iraq and in and around Afghanistan. The bill would also eliminate the income limits for our soldiers' families that have paid this ultimate sacrifice.

Madam Speaker, we can and should do everything we can to help out those families of our brave men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Those families have borne the brunt of this war—and all of us owe them a debt of our gratitude. Mothers are being forced to have tough conversations with their sons on why daddy is not coming home. Fathers are being forced to have tough conversations with their daughters on what happened to mommy. Families are being put in position where they have to struggle both emotionally and economically because of the stress a loss of a loved one places on them. Congress has a duty to do what we can to help these families in their time of need.

While nothing can make up for the loss of these precious lives, at least we can provide some tax relief for these families. These families now have a financial burden to face from the loss of a spouse's income. In many instances, the spouse that was killed in combat was the main breadwinner for the family. Increasing the child tax credit and eliminating the income limits will at least provide some tax relief.

This will provide real relief for almost 2,000 families. Of the troops killed in Iraq and in and around Afghanistan, many were married with

children. According to a report from the Military Homefront for the Department of Defense, 37.8 percent of active duty troops are married with children. The Department of Defense reports that as of October 22, 2007, the total number of military fatalities in Iraq and in and around Afghanistan totaled 4,273 for both conflicts. Based on this data, the Congressional Research Service has estimated that 1,615 troops who were married and had children have died.

Single parents have also been killed in defending our country. The Military Homefront states that 5.4 percent of active duty American troops are single parents. Using this data, CRS has estimated that 231 troops who were single parents have died.

Madam Speaker, we need to provide all of the help we can to these families of our fallen military. H.R. 3961 is a small way to assist those families who have lost a spouse and a parent to their children.

HONORING THE AMERICAN HUNGARIAN FEDERATION ON ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 24, 2007

Mr. LIPINSKI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the American Hungarian Federation on their 100th anniversary. This group, formed in 1906 as a vehicle to advance and protect the interests of Hungarian-Americans, is one of the oldest ethnic organizations in the United States.

Hungarians have been outstanding contributors to our republic since the days of its inception, when Col. Commandant Mihaly Kovats, the Hungarian officer who led the first American cavalry into battle, died fighting the British at Charleston, S.C. in 1779. Their exceptional service and patriotism were again exemplified in 1906 when Hungarian-Americans raised funds for the erection of a statue of George Washington in Budapest, one of the first acts of the newly-formed American Hungarian Federation.

Since its creation, the Federation's noble mission has expanded greatly to assist Hungarians on both sides of the Atlantic as well as advance worldwide the causes of freedom and democracy. They have worked tirelessly to unite those of Hungarian descent, celebrate their shared culture, assist the needy members of their community, and provide relief and shelter to victims of Communist oppression.

In a powerful expression of solidarity with those all over the world who have suffered under Stalinist regimes, the American Hungarian Federation played a pivotal role in the creation of the Victims of Communism Memorial. This monument was dedicated on June 12th by the President of the United States and it honors the more than 100 million people killed worldwide by totalitarian communist regimes.

It is my privilege to honor the American Hungarian Federation on their 100th anniversary and extraordinary contributions to America. Their efforts and labors ensure a brighter future for Hungarians, at home and abroad, as well as for all those who yearn for freedom in our world.

RECOGNIZING THE AMERICAN HIGHWAY USERS ALLIANCE ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 24, 2007

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res 772, to recognize the American Highway Users Alliance on the occasion of its 75th anniversary.

Our Nation's roadways truly are the lifeblood of our economy and an integral part of our everyday lives. Our highway system unites Americans from every state and allows us to explore the diverse culture, geography, and attractions that America has to offer. Highways are critical to the mobility of our Nation by enabling the extensive movement of goods and people. Our highways make it possible for Americans to take more than 660 million trips to visit friends and family every year, and more than 110 million Americans use the highways to commute to and from work. People will travel three trillion miles on our Nation's roads this year. Without our national highway system, America would be a far different place.

The need to connect America with a system of interstate highways was obvious to President George Washington in the first year after our Nation was founded. While traveling to the Ohio country on horseback, Washington observed the isolation and vulnerability caused by a lack of interstate mobility. He also saw the economic impact that an interstate road would have for the viability and survival of the new Nation, and called for the development of a trans-Appalachian road to unify the young Nation. That route was authorized by Congress in 1806, and the "National Road" (later known as U.S. Route 40) became the first federally funded road in U.S. history.

A young Dwight Eisenhower came to a similar conclusion while accompanying an Army convoy from Washington, D.C., to San Francisco in 1919. Eisenhower found that the state of America's transportation system was deficient. Years later, as the Supreme Allied Commander in the Second World War, Eisenhower was impressed by the ability of the autobahns to move military material rapidly across Germany. As President, Eisenhower would sign into law the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 which authorized the Interstate Highway System and established the Highway Trust Fund. The American Highway Users Alliance was instrumental to the passage of this landmark transportation legislation.

Founded in 1932, the American Highway Users Alliance has been a persistent and outspoken proponent for our Nation's highway. Known as the "Highway Users", the alliance has voiced the interests of motorists and businesses on major national highway and traffic safety legislation over the past 75 years. The Highway Users has worked tirelessly to protect the integrity of the Highway Trust Fund and State highway trust funds.

Madam Speaker, the Highway Users has been a consistent advocate in favor of strengthening the national highway network by promoting a strong Federal role in mobility and safety and by advocating policies that benefit all highway users.

For these and other contributions to the daily lives, the economic well-being, and the health and safety of the traveling public, I rise to recognize the outstanding achievements of the American Highway Users Alliance and its sustained contribution in service to our Nation, and to recognize the Alliance's 75th anniversary.

HONORING DR. LUIS LEAL

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 24, 2007

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor Professor Luis Leal on the occasion of his 100th birthday. Professor Leal is a distinguished member of the Santa Barbara community. He is a man who has devoted his life to scholarship and education, a man dedicated to expressing and revealing the richness of Mexican, Latin American and Chicano literature and culture.

Luis Leal was born in 1907 and grew up in Mexico City during the Mexican Revolution. He came to the United States seeking a college education and earned a bachelor's degree at Northwestern University. After a hiatus to serve in World War II, Leal earned his doctorate from the University of Chicago.

After a career teaching at the University of Mississippi, Emory University, and the University of Illinois, Leal "retired" to the Santa Barbara area at the age of 69, only to be invited to join the faculty at UC Santa Barbara as a scholar and teacher, first in the Spanish and Portuguese Department and then in the newly established Center for Chicano Studies.

Leal has enjoyed a distinguished career as one of the most highly regarded scholars of Mexican and Latin American literature, and was one of the first to draw attention to this relatively new field of study. He is the author of over 30 books and 300 articles. In 1988, he received the Distinguished Scholar Award from the National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies in recognition of his lifetime achievement. In 1995, UCSB created the Luis Leal Endowed Chair in Chicano Studies in recognition of his accomplishments.

Leal has also received renowned cultural honors from the Mexican and American governments. In 1992, Mexican President Salinas awarded Leal the Mexican Order of the Aztec Eagle, the highest award granted to foreign citizens. It was President Bill Clinton who presented Leal with the National Humanities Medal in 1997.

As a man who has devoted his life to education and to advancing the study of Mexican, Latin American and Chicano Literature, I today recognize Luis Leal as a distinguished scholar and professor, and as a man dedicated to making our community and this Nation a richer, more vibrant place.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIMOTHY H. BISHOP

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 24, 2007

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Madam Speaker, I was speaking at the U.S. Navy Memorial ceremony in honor of my constituent, Lt.